

Family farming: FAO in action



The goal of the 2014 International Year of Family Farming is to raise the profile of family farming and smallholder farming by focusing world attention on its significant role in eradicating hunger and poverty, providing food security and nutrition, improving livelihoods, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and achieving sustainable development, in particular in rural areas.

What is FAO doing to achieve this goal?

As lead United Nations agency for agricultural and rural development, FAO has been working with family and smallholder farmers long before 2014. Currently FAO is collaborating with national governments and local authorities and organizations to further promote actions in favour of family farmers. Below two projects which show the diversity of FAO's contribution to promoting, facilitating and enhancing family and smallholder farming around the world.

Building resilience in the livelihoods of family farming communities of Bolivia and Colombia

The aim of this project is to contribute to the improvement of family farming through a combination of good agricultural practices and disaster risk management activities at community level. The project proposes a livelihood approach to enhance the resilience of agriculture livelihoods and reduce vulnerability against threats and disasters in order to protect and strengthen the food and nutrition security of rural households in disaster-prone areas such as the Bolivian Altiplano and the Colombian Pacific coast.

The ultimate objective is to empower and strengthen affected family farmers and local institutions by providing them with the instruments to respond more efficiently to disasters (Disaster Risk Management and adaptation to Climate Change) and limit dependence on aid.

Activities include:

- Establishment of training centres to implement and demonstrate crop management techniques that allow risk reduction against floods and landslides
- Workshops with the active participation of local producers, professors and authorities to generate a Community Risk Management Plan
- Training activities aimed directly at families and/or local organizations and public officials (involving teachers and students from the local schools) to strengthen the community's capacity to respond to natural disasters in the agricultural sector.
- Establishment of live seed banks, tool banks/reserves and veterinary kit supplies in each community
- Provision of training equipment, increased infrastructure and research

Strengthening Partnership for scaling up sustainable livelihood in small scale, family farming and indigenous communities

The main beneficiaries of this project are small farmers, indigenous peoples and local communities nurturing the following agricultural heritage systems: coffee system in Ethiopia; rice terraces in Indonesia; floating gardens in Bangladesh; and Siwa oasis in Egypt. Heritage conservation is based on the recognition of the important role that farmers, indigenous peoples and local communities, particularly women, play in conserving and sustaining biodiversity while producing most of the world's food. The project's primary aim is to enhance the capacity building of local farming communities and local/national institutions to conserve and sustainably manage heritage systems and natural resources, generate income and add economic value to goods and services of such systems in a sustainable fashion.

Activities include:

- Raise awareness on sustainable agricultural practices (conservation agriculture) through policy advocacy and pilot sites
- Enhance partnership network supporting the livelihoods of small-scale, family farming and indigenous communities by establishing alliances and linking partners and stakeholders (farmers, academics, institutions, markets)
- Promotion of traditional cultivation, farming systems, traditional crop varieties and access to markets